

RECEIVED OCT 29 2010

AGENCY NAME: Center for New Americans

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2011 CDBG REQUEST \$24,000

Cover Sheet – Social Service Activity

1. Project Name: *Center for New Americans ESOL and Technology Program*

2. Budget Request: *\$20,000*

3. Activity Identification – please check one

* Homelessness and sheltering

X Education: outreach and advocacy

* Mental health services

* Emergency & preventive services: rental, food, fuel, shelter and transitional assistance

* Other

4. Number of low/moderate income individuals/families served: *200*

5. Describe how you will ensure that participants meet low/moderate income requirements:

Center for New Americans has an intake process which includes documentation of income and family configuration.

6. Demonstrate consistency with the Town's Community Development Strategy and the priorities as established by the Community Development Committee:

One of the key priorities of the Town's Community Development Strategy is encouraging and supporting the town's diversity. CNA views itself as a key partner of the town and its public schools in that CNA reaches out to people from diverse backgrounds to offer them the skills they need to integrate successfully into their new community. In fact, the new Amherst Master Plan makes a point of emphasizing the importance of supporting all of the town's residents: "Amherst is becoming an increasingly diverse community in terms of ethnicity, age, income, education, physical ability, and in many other ways. Amherst's services and facilities must keep pace with the population's changing needs ..."

Supporting Center for New Americans allows Amherst services to keep pace with residents' changing needs in a cost-effective fashion. An investment by the Town in CNA's program leverages CNA's lean, hard-working staff, large network of well-trained volunteers, and free classes, employment counseling, and referral services for Amherst's immigrant residents.

Please submit responses to the following questions:

A. Please describe in full the project for which you are requesting funding:

Center for New Americans (CNA) is a community-based, non-profit adult education and resource center that provides the under-served immigrant, refugee and migrant communities of the Pioneer Valley with education and resources to learn English, become involved members of their communities, and obtain tools necessary to maintain economic independence and stability. Although CNA has its administrative offices in Northampton, the organization was founded in Amherst in 1992 as the English Language component of the Amherst-based Tibetan Resettlement Program.

Center for New Americans requests funding from the Amherst CDBG fund in support of its comprehensive education program, which includes English language and technology classes, family literacy, and outreach and support services for immigrants.

This request comes at a particularly auspicious moment for Center for New Americans' Amherst program. CNA and the Amherst Regional Public Schools recently received a landmark grant from the Barbara Bush Foundation for Family Literacy which enables them to establish their collaborative family literacy program downtown in the Bangs Community Center. Thanks to the willingness of the third partner, the Town of Amherst, to welcome this collaboration in the Bangs Community Center, immigrant parents will now be able to participate in CNA's English language classes, bring their young children to early childhood education classes, participate with their children in joint reading activities, and receive a full range of support services.

A CDBG award would support the following CNA programs:

- *Classes in English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL)* - CNA offers four levels of classes in Amherst. They range from Beginning (*Student Proficiency Level* or SPL of 0-2) to Advanced (SPL 6+). The ESOL classes help limited English speakers to acquire speaking, listening, reading and writing skills in English. CNA's educational philosophy dictates that all classroom content is based on needs, interests, and goals identified by learners. Classes meet seven hours per week over the course of 38 weeks.
- *Technology classes* - CNA's technology program incorporates technology instruction into the language classes, and offers additional support in the technology lab. Immigrants receive flexible one-on-one instruction in basic computer skills, such as word-processing, spreadsheets, desktop publishing, email, and the internet. The focus of the internet instruction is on information about applying for citizenship and finding jobs.
- *Family Literacy* – As reported by the National Institute of Child Health & Human Development, a recent study confirms what the Amherst Public Schools have long known: that “a mother's reading skills is the greatest determinant of her children's future academic success.” CNA's family literacy program enables parents who are studying English and have young children to receive early childhood education for their children and parenting support for themselves, allowing them to nurture their child's literacy and development along with their own learning. It also enables the parents and the Amherst Public Schools staff to develop strong relationships with each family before the children enter the schools.

- *Outreach and support services* – CNA offers students free wrap-around services including employment counseling, citizenship coaching, and referrals to health care, housing, and other services. Through expansion of support service hours at the Bangs Community Center, CNA's capacity for outreach, engagement and intake will be increased.

Center for New Americans serves about 200 immigrants annually through its Amherst program site. Most CNA students (about 84%) are low or very low income, as determined by guidelines established by the Department of Housing and Urban Development. Many work in low-wage service sector jobs with little job security, no benefits, and little opportunity for advancement.

B. What is the community's need for the proposed project/program?

According to Community Action!'s 2009-2011 needs assessment, "The diversity of the diversity in Franklin and Hampshire Counties is unusual for a rural area." Amherst's 2010 Master Plan provides additional detail on the region's diversity, noting that even against the backdrop of growing regional diversity, Amherst stands out. Slightly more than 20% of Amherst's population was non-white in 2000 and Amherst residents represented 53% of the people from minority group backgrounds living in Hampshire County. The Master Plan also notes that about 20% of Amherst residents age 5 and over speak a language other than English at home. Whereas 11% of U.S. residents are foreign born, the statistic is 13% in Amherst.

One reason, perhaps, for the growth in Amherst's immigrant population, which is predominantly low-income, may be Amherst's welcoming policies and climate. The draft of the 2011 Amherst Community Development Strategy Update acknowledges the town's intentional policies which are specifically designed to foster and maintain diversity: "... Amherst continues to work to maintain diversity of housing choice for the sake of protecting the community's diversity" and "Amherst values its economic and cultural diversity."

The composition of Center for New Americans' ESOL classes reflect the town's diversity. CNA serves individuals and families who originate from as many as fifty countries and speak more than thirty-five different languages. CNA's Amherst classes include refugees from Tibet, Cambodia, Vietnam and Bosnia, as well as immigrants from El Salvador, Brazil, Cape Verde, Ecuador, Russia, Mexico and China. These newcomers arrive at CNA with widely varying academic backgrounds. While the majority of Amherst students have elementary, secondary, or even higher education, there are others with little or no formal education, even in their own native languages. CNA is recognized by peer agencies as especially skilled in serving these students who face many learning challenges.

Although this population is currently under-served largely due to budget cuts at the state level, Center for New Americans is not the only program in Amherst which serves immigrants. The Jones Library ESL program, which collaborates closely with CNA, provides one-on-one tutoring for immigrants. The Literacy Project offers classes for adult learners who wish to attain a GED or pursue other basic literacy education beyond learning English, some of whom have begun their education at CNA. CNA is unique, though, in its ability to provide ESOL education to immigrants in a classroom setting and to offer comprehensive wrap-around services. It is also important to note that Center for New Americans' program is targeted to newcomers who intend to be long-term residents of the town, as opposed to the large more transient population of foreign scholars and their families who come to Amherst to through the university community.

C. Community Involvement

Each of CNA's core programs (ESOL classes, computer skills training, employment assistance, volunteer tutoring, citizenship assistance, support services and family literacy) was developed in direct response to the needs of CNA learners and the larger immigrant community. The program curriculum evolves in response to students' needs, goals and requests. In order to ensure that the project remains responsive to constituent needs, CNA students keep learning logs and fill out class evaluations. The program's director regularly visits classes and speaks directly to students. And, CNA conducts focus groups to actively solicit student feedback.

This year, with support from the Community Foundation of Western Massachusetts, CNA laid the foundation for establishing an Alumni Association. This involved reaching out to and surveying former students to assess CNA's impact on their educational and other goal achievement. As this new Alumni Association becomes active, CNA will actively solicit and take advantage of feedback and suggestions from these former students to fine-tune the program.

In addition, CNA's governance structure directly engages community members and former students in setting policy and direction for the agency by including them as members of its Board of Directors. Currently, three former students serve on CNA's board of directors. On a more macro level, Center for New Americans staff participate in coalition meetings, such as the Amherst Human Services Network through which providers discuss and address resident needs. In keeping with this collaborative approach, Community Action! Regularly turns to CNA as a core partner in its outreach efforts to new immigrants. CNA's Executive Director serves on the boards of both the Franklin Hampshire Regional Employment Board and the Hampshire Council of Social Agencies (COSA).

Finally, Center for New Americans is part of the fabric of the Amherst community. In this context, CNA has offered learning groups for parents at the Crocker Farm School, at the Amherst Family Center, and at Amherst Head Start in partnership with the staff at these institutions. The family literacy partnership with the Amherst Public Schools in the Bangs Community Center is another example of CNA's long tradition of community collaboration.

D. Project Feasibility

1. Evidence that the community at large or beneficiaries will use the program - Currently there are thirty individuals on the waiting list for classes at the Amherst site. Twenty-one of these individuals are Amherst residents. These low income newcomers have each taken part in an initial intake and placement test, but must wait due to limited availability of classroom slots. Also indicative of community need, data tracked by the Massachusetts Department of Education's SMARTT system, shows that students participate in CNA classes at an enrollment/attendance rate that is higher than the state average. The same can be said for their rate of learning gain. Furthermore, when given opportunities to provide feedback to CNA through learning logs, surveys and focus groups, students consistently give high marks to services across the board.

2. Availability and source of matching or other funds - Center for New Americans receives annual funding from the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) which helps to complete the project. In addition, the Hampshire County United Way is poised to open one of its partnership funding categories for the first time in ten years and several United Way board members have indicated that the United Way would look favorably on a CNA proposal. This year's Barbara Bush Foundation for Family Literacy funds as well as new funds which it leveraged from the Verizon Foundation will also support the Amherst program.

3. Roles and responsibilities of personnel in addition to internal controls -. Jim Ayres, Center for New Americans' Executive Director has held his position for the past eleven years. He has a background in non-profit administration, an MBA with a focus on Non-Profit Administration from the University of Massachusetts, Amherst and an M.A. in International Affairs from the Fletcher School at Tufts University. He oversees the entire program, prepares the budget, and works closely with the Board of Directors. In addition to Jim Ayres, the CNA management team includes ESOL Program Coordinator Nicole Graves who has thirty years experience in the classroom and holds a Masters Degree and Certificate of Advanced Graduate Study in Education and ESOL language acquisition. She has been with CNA for fifteen years. Nicole teaches the beginning level class as well as a literacy class in Amherst. Computer classes are taught by Jairo L. Rizo, who was a computer instructor in his home country of Nicaragua and began his association with CNA as a student. Intermediate and Advanced level ESOL classes are taught by Pesha Black and Daniela Cazacu respectively both of whom were experienced teachers before joining CNA. Center for New Americans' financial status is overseen by its Board of Directors and an independent auditor. CNA's board treasurer is Sheryl Sadler-Twyon, a Vice President at Florence Savings Bank who manages the Bank's IT department and serves as the Bank's Chief Compliance Officer.

4. Past accomplishments, expertise, successful completion of past activities - Center for New Americans has served the W. Mass immigrant community since 1992. A strong educational philosophy, experienced, committed teachers, responsive management and creative programming have all allowed the agency to develop a strong reputation, locally, regionally and within the Commonwealth. The agency is ranked 8th out of 88 ESOL organizations statewide by the Mass. DESE on its key performance criteria (student attendance, goal achievement, learning gains, and progression). The service offerings proposed within this application are areas in which CNA has significant experience and a proven track record. In deference to CNA's expertise, DESE awarded CNA two capacity-building, curriculum development grants this past year, focused on career development and family literacy. Finally, CNA is fortunate to count on the assistance of over 60 volunteers who remain engaged year after year because of their commitment to CNA's program. Their investment of time translates to valuable individual attention for CNA's immigrant students.

5. Program budget – please see attached.

E. Impact: Center for New Americans' impact can be assessed as follows:

1. *Language gains* – Learners will make measurable and significant gains in their understanding and use of the English language, including gains in the areas of speaking/listening, reading/writing, pronunciation, vocabulary and grammar. Progress will be gauged using the BEST Plus assessment test, administered three times per year.
2. *Employability* – Participants will improve their employability by gaining new language and computer skills needed in the workplace, and by gaining a better understanding of resources, systems and processes related to gaining and maintaining employment (measured through follow-up data through the Massachusetts SMARTT system / NRS system and through self-reported data from participants).
3. *Connection* – Learners will report a decreased sense of social and linguistic isolation in their lives and in relation to the larger Amherst community (self-reported through student learning logs and surveys)

4. *Civic Involvement* - Participants will report a greater awareness of and use of community and public resources (documented through learner logs, surveys and counseling records).
5. *Parent Involvement* – Participating parents will gain skills and confidence to participate actively in their children’s learning processes (self-reported through learner logs and surveys).
6. *Learner Goal Achievement* – Learners will articulate individual goals, such as obtaining a library card or learning to drive which CNA staff will support them to achieve and will acknowledge and celebrate with them at our regular end-of-cycle events.

F. Evaluation

Goals & Assessments: Center for New Americans’ short-term goals are to assist immigrants in acquiring proficiency in the English language and in technology to be able to communicate effectively in the community. Effective communication ranges from being able to answer the phone to being able to open a bank account, determine a bus schedule, converse with a child’s teacher, and seek health care.

CNA’s long-term goals are for immigrants to attain self-sufficiency, which we define as securing stable housing, employment at a living wage and personal independence.

In terms of tracking the service’s impact on clients over time, CNA tracks the number of individuals receiving services. CNA also tracks their language learning progress, using the BEST Plus language assessment. CNA relies on a skills checklist to track progress in the computer program. CNA also monitors students’ individual goal achievement. Much of this outcome data is reported to DESE as well.

The establishment of an Alumni Association will enable CNA to more effectively track clients’ progress over time and their progress, as evidenced by a stable housing situation and job, as well as the ability to participate fully in the life of the community, as evidenced by civic engagement and/or other means of in the community. These goals are predicated on immigrants having acquired the language skills and confidence to obtain a job.

In terms of linkages to other human/social service programs in the community, Center for New Americans collaborates with many organizations and participates in several coalitions. CNA is part of the Amherst Human Services Network, COSA, and Regional Employment Board.

G. Agency Information

As indicated earlier, Center for New Americans was founded in 1992 as the English Language component of the Amherst-based Tibetan Resettlement Program. In this capacity, it served 15 students. Today, eighteen years later, Center for New Americans has program sites in Amherst, Northampton, and Greenfield, and serves students who come from those communities, as well as from Holyoke, Chicopee, Easthampton, Turners Falls, and Sunderland. CNA annually serves over 450 students from 50 countries who together speak over 35 different languages.

Center for New Americans (CNA) is a community-based, non-profit adult education and resource center that provides the under-served immigrant, refugee and migrant communities of

Massachusetts' Pioneer Valley with education and resources to learn English, become involved members of their communities, and obtain tools necessary to maintain economic independence and stability.

The Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE), the state's governing and funding agency for education programs, has rated Center for New Americans in the 90th (or higher) percentile on three of its six key performance measures, and in the top tier of the 87 programs which are measured statewide.

Center for New Americans Performance in relation to all DESE-funded Programs

<i>Performance Measurements</i>	<i>CNA Rank vs. all state-ranked programs</i>
Overall Performance	8 of 88
Goal Achievement	4 of 88
Learning Gains	19 of 88
Participation Rate	29 of 88
Cumulative Participation Hours	41 of 88
Assessment Participation	9 of 88

These ratings clearly indicate that based on its experience and skills, CNA regularly succeeds in its effort to equip immigrants with the tools to integrate into the community.

In recognition of CNA's reputation in the immigrant community, Senator Stan Rosenberg identified CNA as the leading local partner in the 2010 Census outreach effort to hard-to-count populations. In addition, the Governor's Office designated CNA as one of the ten network organizations statewide to solicit feedback on the New Americans Agenda. And, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services counts on CNA to collaborate in its outreach effort. Finally, Center for New Americans is a past recipient of multiple years of Amherst Human Services Funding, an indication that the Town of Amherst has long recognized the importance of supporting CNA's vital program.

ATTACHMENT-E

PROJECT BUDGET FORM						
Program Name: <u>Center for New Americans</u>						
Program Period: 12 Months						
July 2011 through June 2012						
PERSONNEL Position	Hourly Rate	Hours Per Week	# Weeks	Total Program Cost	CDBG Cost	Non-CDBG Cost
ESOL Teachers	\$ 18.55	58	40	\$ 43,036	\$ 4,000	\$ 39,036
Support Services Coordinator	\$ 15.75	10	52	\$ 8,190	\$ 2,500	\$ 5,690
Support Services Assistant	\$12.75	16	40	\$ 15,912	\$ 5,500	\$ 10,412
Computer Instructor	\$ 12.75	18	40	\$ 9,180	\$ 2,100	\$ 7,080
Volunteer Coordinator	\$ 15.25	7.5	52	\$ 5,948		\$ 5,948
Executive Director	\$ 32.75	10	52	\$ 17,030	\$ 1,200	\$ 15,830
Fiscal Coordinator	\$ 19.50	8	52	\$ 8,112		\$ 8,112
ESOL Coordinator	\$ 19.55	14	52	\$ 14,232		\$ 14,232
Planning and Development	\$ 23.00	6	52	\$ 7,176		\$ 7,176
TOTAL SALARY				\$ 128,816	\$ 15,300	\$113,516
Benefits at 11.5%				\$ 14,814	\$ 1,760	\$ 13,054
Taxes at 13.5%				\$ 17,390	\$ 2,066	\$ 15,325
TOTAL PERSONNEL				\$ 161,020	\$ 19,125	\$141,895
Non-Personnel						
Rent, utilities, security				\$ 16,800	--	\$ 16,800
Telephone				\$ 1,480		\$ 1,480
Insurance				\$ 1,610		\$ 1,610
Postage				\$ 800		\$ 800
Supplies and Materials				\$ 2,880	\$ 775	\$ 2,105
Travel/Mileage				\$ 1,410		\$ 1,410
Contractual - Early Childhood				\$ 24,800	\$ 4,100	\$ 20,800
Accounting				\$ 1,800		\$ 1,800
Reproduction/printing				\$ 760		\$ 760
Advertising				\$ 230		\$ 230
Community Events				\$ 180		\$ 180
Fees Subscriptions				\$ 95		\$ 95
other: child care reimb.				\$ -		\$ -
other: transportation reimb.				\$ 380		\$ 380
other:						
other:						
other:						
TOTAL ADMINISTRATIVE				\$ 53,225	\$ 4,875	\$ 48,350
TOTAL PROGRAM COSTS				\$ 214,245	\$ 24,000	\$190,245